

## **Suggested Supervision Curriculum for the 40-Hour Course to Prepare LCSWs to Supervise LMSWs Working Toward Their Licensed Clinical Social Worker Designation**

**NOTE:** These curricula guides include 1) specific strategies of supervision, and 2) items dealing with the quality of services the supervisee delivers to the public.

**The Board suggests that Providers cover all curriculum elements, though the order in which elements are presented may vary.**

***All supervision training is to be offered in a non-discriminatory manner. Issues such as gender, religious or moral beliefs, race, ethnicity, and other individual characteristics are to be treated even-handedly and equitably.***

### **1. How to Maximize a Supervisee's Learning**

- A. The mission of supervision toward the IPR is to help the supervisee become an independent, ethical, effective professional in clinical social work practice. To reach that mission, what specific goals should the supervisor try to achieve in supervision?
- B. Supervision is an interaction. What does the supervisor need from the supervisee? What does the supervisee need from the supervisor?
- C. Adults have a shorter attention span, need more time to perform learning activities, and have a deeper psychological need to be self-directing in learning than younger learners. How should the supervisor construct supervision in order to incorporate principles of adult learning? How can major learning theories, such as Benjamin Bloom's 6 major categories in the cognitive domain (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) help organize the learning process?
- D. Adult learners need to be very involved in the process of identifying their own strengths and areas in which they hope to become more skilled. Supervisors should create an atmosphere in which supervisees can assess themselves.

### **2. What Supervisees Need to Know About Regulation**

- A. Supervision toward the LCSW is regulated by the state, as is practice by the LCSW. Supervisors must know the regulatory law and rules as set forth in 22 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 781, concerning the licensure and regulation of social workers, and must help supervisees to know the law and rules. (State regulation of any profession stems from the state's constitutional rights and duties to protect the welfare of the state's citizens.)
- B. Supervisors must understand the legal principles and regulatory requirements for supervision and supervisors in Texas, referring back to §781.102 for guidance in answering the following questions.

- i. What are the definitions of various relevant terms, such as consultation, group supervision, supervision hour, etc.?
  - ii. What are the various categories of licensure in Texas? What professional duties are people holding the various categories of licensure allowed to perform? Are different categories restricted to certain standards of practice?
  - iii. At the successful conclusion of this course, which licensure categories will the supervisor be entitled to supervise?
  - iv. What is the difference between supervision for professional development and employment supervision?
  - v. Is the supervisee considered to be a client of the social worker?
  - vi. What are the legal liabilities that a supervisor assumes when he/she supervises toward licensure?
  - vii. Does the supervisee have to be employed to be working on supervision hours?
  - viii. How does a supervisor know if his/her supervisee is doing clinical or non-clinical social work?
  - ix. What are the requirements for experience and supervision hours?
  - x. What paperwork must the supervisor and supervisee complete? What are the timelines for submitting required paperwork to the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners? What are the repercussions if paperwork is not submitted timely and properly?
- C. Supervisors and supervisees should be particularly familiar with the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners Code of Conduct ([http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/sw\\_conduct.shtml](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/sw_conduct.shtml)). They should compare this Code of Conduct (behavior for which they are legally liable) with the NASW Code of Ethics (ideals to which social workers aspire).
- D. They should be familiar with the purposes and procedures of the professional complaint process in Texas, and understand the concept of due process.
- E. Supervisees should understand the purpose of state regulation of any profession: to protect the public. They should explore the differences in goals between professional regulation (public protection) and professional associations, which strive to uphold and improve the profession.
- F. It is instructive to explore the history and nature of social work regulation, which began in 1934 in Puerto Rico and now extends to all states and jurisdictions in the U.S., Canada, U.S. holdings, and numerous foreign countries. Texas has a title protection law, not a practice act. The Texas law has evolved over four decades, with the most recent overhaul of the law occurring in 2003. How does Texas law compare with laws in other states? (For comparative data, visit the web site of Association of Social Work Boards, [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org).)
- G. Is a professional's license portable to another state or jurisdiction (such as District of Columbia, Canada, Puerto Rico)? Is supervision toward licensure portable? ASWB provides direction on these questions.
- H. Supervisees should know how to access the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners' web site, (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/default.shtml>), access the social work regulatory law ([http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/sw\\_laws.shtml](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/sw_laws.shtml)), and the board's rules ([http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/sw\\_rules.shtml](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/sw_rules.shtml)). They

should also be able to access the web site for the Texas Attorney General's Office (<http://www.oag.state.tx.us/>) and Texas Legislature Online (<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>), in order to track laws relevant to social work practice.

### 3. The Supervisory Relationship

- A. Supervision is an anchor for practitioners, an entryway into the community of practice, and a function of professional accountability. Supervisors and supervisees should understand the difference between types and uses of supervision strategies:
  - i. Administration supervision (ensures adherence to policy and procedure)
  - ii. Education supervision (dispels ignorance and upgrades skills)
  - iii. Supportive supervision (improves morale)
- B. Supervisors should know how to make professional disclosure statements, describing the professional services the supervisor is offering:
  - i. Clarify the rights and responsibilities of both parties
  - ii. Outline the evaluation methods to be used
  - iii. Highlight potential outcomes, risks, and benefits of supervision
- C. Supervisors should know how to develop a formal and specific supervision plan:
  - i. Outlines the mutually-agreed-upon goals of supervision
  - ii. Explains the timeframe of the relationship
  - iii. Specifies how and when work will be evaluated
  - iv. Identifies the responsibilities of both the supervisor and supervisee in supervision, and the mutual responsibilities if goals are not achieved
  - v. Ensures that both supervisor and supervisee agree and sign the formal plan
- D. Supervisors and supervisees should frankly discuss the cost of supervision, how and when costs are to be paid, and the consequences of non-payment.
- E. Supervisees and supervisors should mutually address, as needed and repeatedly and within professional boundaries, the ways that the supervisory relationship is affected by factors of culture, age, race, gender, different abilities, religion, ethnicity, social and economic class, language and accent, education, political beliefs, etc.
  - i. Discuss how to set ground rules and provide a safe environment in which to discuss one's culture and how that culture may affect relationships with clients and co-workers.
  - ii. Explore how culture may affect how different clients respond to and communicate about distress. What clinical skills and strategies are appropriate with different client groups?
  - iii. Strive to develop an attitude of appreciation for differences.
  - iv. Avoid making generalizations about people based on various factors of their lives; ask questions before making conclusions. Don't overemphasize differences—people have more in common than they have differences.
- F. Professionals should understand and balance the roles of observation and reflection/analysis in supervision. Supervisees need to learn not only to do, but to think. They need to have a conceptual perspective (why?) and a strategic perspective (how?)
- G. Supervision inherently involves power, and ambivalence about power. Supervisees should learn how to accept the power differential in supervision, and

how to use it to both nurture and restrict professional behavior. They should examine the negative effects of refusing to accept the power inherent in supervision.

- H. How do social workers develop as professionals? What implications does a professional's level of professional development have on the kind of supervision the professional will need?
- I. Supervisors and supervisees must know how to draw the line between supervision and therapy. They must keep focused on cases and clients, not on personal dilemmas. At the same time, they should explore how the professional's personal difficulties interact with relationships with clients, and how to mitigate harmful effects of such interactions.
- J. Explore how to discriminate between and choose models appropriate for different client groups and agencies, blending factors from such supervision models as
  - i. Psychodynamic
  - ii. Person-centered
  - iii. Cognitive-behavioral
  - iv. Family therapy
  - v. Feminist

#### 4. Core Supervisory Skills

- A. Discuss and practice attending skills (including body position, eye contact, and physical presence).
- B. Develop skills in verbalizing clearly and accurately, which helps the supervisee mentally link and integrate knowledge and memory.
  - i. Devise ways to encourage the supervisee to **write, write, write**.
  - ii. Practice giving accurate and appropriate feedback to writing and to monitor documentation.
  - iii. Discuss appropriate uses of process notes and progress notes.
- C. Think of ways to incorporate learning activities such as attending board meetings, reading and reporting on what was read, observing support groups, etc. into the supervision process.
- D. Discuss the importance of generalizing: moving beyond specific case material to general principles that apply to multiple situations.
- E. Consider how to use examples wisely, in such ways that examples are grounded in theory, and are presented as examples only (not as templates for all cases).
- F. Study decision making, which is a complex mental task. Understand that self-reflection results in greater behavioral change than confrontation by a supervisor.
- G. Practice giving caring confrontation to supervisees, urging them to go beyond empathy and understand the implications of their thoughts and feelings. Practice taking responsibility for one's responses by using "I" statements.
- H. Explore ways to be aware of and manage transference and counter-transference.
- I. Encourage supervisees to be creative and think divergently about supervision. Study ways to use books, movies, and the arts as part of supervision.
- J. Discuss using audio and video taping as a supervisory tool.

- K. Compare benefits and problems of incorporating technology, such as email, videoconferencing, chat rooms, instant messaging, into supervision.
- L. Work out effective ways to do role-plays or simulations in supervision, working out specific learning goals ahead of time and giving supervisees time to think about their roles before participating in the event.
- M. Discuss shadowing and ways to make it more effective.
  - i. Set up goals for the shadowing experience.
  - ii. Orient the supervisee to the case.
  - iii. Identify questions for the supervisee to discuss after the experience.
- N. Think of ways to allow the supervisee to teach others, which is the most lasting learning experience.
- O. Discuss personal safety on the job!!
  - i. How can you increase safety in the office AND in the field?
  - ii. How can you help an agency to build processes that help ensure safety?
- P. Discuss self-care strategies, in the realms of physical, emotional, cognitive, relational, and spiritual well-being.
  - i. Study secondary trauma and compassion fatigue in helping professionals.
  - ii. Identify ways to avoid stress and burnout.
- Q. Explore the reality that supervisors will get resistance from supervisees, and how to address resistance.
- R. Examine supervision in groups.
  - i. Think through how to set up a group and develop goals and effective group processes and rules.
  - ii. Examine how a group develops.
  - iii. Compare the benefits and difficulties of individual supervision vs. group supervision.
- S. Explore ways to handle conflict with others.
- T. Think through ways to handle situations in which a professional has performance problems. Consider not only performance issues that result from lack of knowledge and skills, but also those that result from the social worker's impairment.

## **5. Diagnosis Issues**

- A. Review basic diagnostic categories.
- B. Review basic human development theories, from birth to death, discussing how various diagnostic categories may be affected by developmental issues. Review how individuals and families live in and respond to systems, such as schools, workplace, church, etc.
- C. Use DSM as a training tool, while recognizing its limitations.
- D. Develop strategies to help the supervisee learn how to avoid misusing diagnostic criteria, such as having the supervisee demonstrate how he/she uses the criteria and how he/she weeds out other diagnoses.
- E. Discuss the ethics of diagnosis:

- i. Misdiagnosis can waste time, create ineffective treatment, or miss suicidal ideations.
  - ii. Deal with the reality that diagnosis can affect insurance payments; examine the ethical obligations to avoid being influenced by reimbursements.
  - iii. Look at how certain diagnoses may be associated in the public's mind with certain life factors (sexual orientation, race, gender, poverty, etc.). Determine ways to avoid stereotyping and inflexibility in diagnosis. Examine beliefs about certain populations. Avoid labeling.
  - iv. Increase sensitivity to emphasizing pathology, or minimizing pathology.
  - v. Study causes of misdiagnosis: an attempt to make a complex process more manageable; discomfort with uncertainty; inexperience; lack of self-awareness; using flawed instruments; incomplete information; relying on an interpreter.
- F. Study diagnostic bias: the mistakes professionals make in gathering or processing information about the client's problems and reactions.
- G. Help the supervisee examine his/her personal reactions to certain diagnostic categories, and encourage understanding of the root causes of those reactions.
- H. Examine parallel process in supervision. It can occur when the supervisee unconsciously reflects during supervision the feelings he/she experienced in client sessions, or when the supervisor is too distant or direct with the supervisee, who in turn is too distant or direct with the client.

## **6. Documentation**

- A. Discuss the elements of accurate and legally defensible case records.
- B. Determine the elements of accurate and legally defensible supervisory records.
- C. Discuss ways to keep up with documentation on a timely and efficient basis.
- D. Know the law on when a professional must release records, and the appropriate procedures, timing, and format for releasing records.
- E. Examine how and when to use email in ways that protect the professional and the client.
- F. Discuss how to write clear, accurate assessments of supervisees, such as letters of recommendation.
- G. Determine strategies to help supervisees learn to write appropriate, accurate documents (such as adoption studies or custody evaluations) for courts and other legal entities.
- H. Develop exercises to help prepare supervisees to testify in court clearly and accurately.

## **7. Handling Finances and Logistics of Practicing Autonomously**

- A. Define yourself and your autonomous practice.
  - i. What is your personal and profession mission?
  - ii. Do you wish to develop a stand-alone practice or remain affiliated with an agency? Will you be a sole practitioner, develop a group practice,



- affiliate with an institution, or develop a limited liability corporation? How entrepreneurial do you want to be? Do you intend to Do Business As (DBA)?
- iii. If you develop your autonomous practice independently, do you intend to employ people? Do you intend to employ yourself? If you employ yourself, can you fire yourself?
- B. Carefully think through the logistics of your autonomous practice, if you establish a practice which is independent of an agency umbrella.
- i. What hours will you keep?
  - ii. Where will your practice be located?
  - iii. What policies and procedures do you need to establish?
  - iv. What kind of contract will you establish with clients? Will you provide services directly to clients, or to institutions?
  - v. Do you need to hire office staff?
  - vi. What office and telephone equipment do you need? How will you secure these items? Can you develop a relationship with an office supplier?
- C. If you practice independently of an agency, how will you market yourself (your skills and reputation), and the services you offer (through radio, TV, print, web site)?
- D. If you practice autonomously of an agency, how will you develop networks to support your practice?
- i. How do you generate referrals and cultivate referral sources?
  - ii. To whom will you refer? How will you follow up on the referrals you make?
  - iii. Are there ways to cross-market by combining resources with others?
- E. What money practices will you follow if you have an independent practice?
- i. What type of account will you establish for this practice?
  - ii. How will you keep and manage your financial records?
  - iii. What fees will you establish?
  - iv. What payment plans should you establish?
  - v. How much pro-bono work are you prepared to do?
  - vi. What financial policies will you have for clients who do not pay timely?
  - vii. How will you handle collections?
  - viii. What level of malpractice insurance should you carry?
  - ix. How will you budget your money (dedicating money for employees, overhead, advertising, taxes, etc.?)
  - x. Are your financial records accurate and clear enough to survive an audit?
- F. Do you understand the tax implications of your business? How do you keep yourself legal in terms of taxes? Do you need a professional accountant or money-manager to help with tax issues?
- G. Will you be asking for insurance reimbursement? Do you understand the legalities of reimbursement? Do you know the legal consequences of improper reimbursement practices? Do you need professional help with this issue?
- H. What kind of retirement plan can you establish?

- I. Do you understand that independent practice ebbs and flows, and that the money does not come in regularly and predictably?
- J. Are you clear on your legal and ethical obligations, and your legal liability?
  - i. Do you understand confidentiality and mandatory reporting obligations?
  - ii. Have you thought through the potential for dual relationships and how to avoid them?
  - iii. Do you understand the concept of personal and/or professional negligence in your practice?
  - iv. Are you clear about how and what to document?
  - v. Do you know what to do if you receive a subpoena?
  - vi. Are you up-to-date on HIPAA?
  - vii. Are your record-keeping processes and products ready for an audit?
  - viii. Are your computer records sufficiently protected from hackers? Do you have firewall protection and password protection?
- K. How will you give back to the profession and to the community?

## **8. Ethical Supervision**

- A. Talk about boundaries, understanding that in supervision, boundaries will always be blurred.
  - i. In what kinds of situations do boundary issues occur (such as gift-giving, confidentiality, respecting clients' choices, time spent with clients and clients' families, business and financial relationships, and sex)?
  - ii. How can a professional distinguish between simple encounters, overlapping relationships, and multiple relationships?
  - iii. How does a dual or multiple relationship affect the professional's relationship with the client?
  - iv. What does a professional do when he/she senses he is in danger of violating boundaries?
  - v. How do boundary violations lead to covert agendas, loss of objectivity, and loss of focus on the client?
- B. Discuss how to identify when a professional has an ethical problem (such as coping with more than one value in a situation, or being uncertain about what the values involved really are).
- C. Study how to make ethically correct decisions by exploring the problem, identifying the ethical parameters, making a judgment based on professional discretion, and evaluating the results.
- D. Use the Texas Code of Conduct and the NASW Code of Ethics to generate discussion of ethical issues, realizing that ethical decision-making is not a linear process, nor is it strictly a cognitive process.
- E. Emphasize the necessity of developing relationships with a supervisor or colleagues in order to discuss ethical concerns.
- F. Compare and contrast the nature of and response to substandard professional performance, whether from incompetence, unethical judgment, and professional impairment.



- G. Discuss how to handle situations in which the professional is impaired (by drugs, alcohol, mental or physical illness, gambling addictions, financial issues, excessive religiosity, sexual addictions, inability to abide by agency policies, or struggles with personal grief and loss).
- H. Ensure that the supervisee understands that all professionals make ethical mistakes. Encourage learning from mistakes.
- I. Examine the complaints most frequently made against social workers, such as inadequate record keeping, inability to support billing charges, breaches of confidentiality, failure to comply with a client's legitimate records request, treating a minor without parental permission, and inappropriate relationships.
- J. Examine the therapist's duty to warn, looking at relevant laws in the state.
- K. Review relevant laws on when and how to report suspected child abuse or elder abuse.
- L. Discuss sexual harassment on the job.
- M. Continue to address issues of discrimination and prejudice from an ethical perspective.
- N. Discuss fraud, financial exploitation, and how to handle financial issues of clinical practice ethically. Talk about sound business strategies in running a practice or an agency.
- O. Explore the meanings of legal terms that affect supervision, such as:
  - i. Negligence, negligent liability, and negligent supervision
  - ii. Standard of care and statutory liability
  - iii. Vicarious and direct liability
  - iv. Privacy, confidentiality, privilege, and privileged communication
  - v. Informed consent
  - vi. Subpoena and subpoena duces tecum
  - vii. Duty to report, duty to protect, and duty to warn
  - viii. Sexual harassment
  - ix. Fraud
- P. Discuss ways to minimize liability risks:
  - i. Don't supervise beyond competence.
  - ii. Evaluate and monitor supervisee's competence.
  - iii. Be consistently available for supervision.
  - iv. Formulate a sound supervision plan.
  - v. Maintain written policies (such as what to do in case of emergencies, ensuring informed consent, abiding by agency policies).
  - vi. Document all supervisory activities.
  - vii. Consult with appropriate professionals.
  - viii. Practice consistent feedback and evaluation.
  - ix. Ensure that you have liability insurance coverage.
  - x. Evaluate and screen clients under your supervisee's care.
  - xi. Ensure confidentiality.
  - xii. Incorporate informed consent in practice.
  - xiii. Know the state regulatory law and rules.

## **9. Evaluation from Beginning to End**

- A. Discuss evaluation as an on-going process in supervision, starting at the beginning and continuing to the end of the process.
- B. Identify the supervisee's rights to due process in evaluation.
- C. Distinguish between formative evaluation and summative evaluation.
- D. Incorporate self-evaluation of both the supervisor and supervisee.
- E. Identify problems in evaluation and strategies to help deal with the problems.
  - i. We often don't have clear-cut standards of professional competence.
  - ii. We are taught to be non-judgmental, but evaluation requires judgment.
  - iii. Evaluation creates tension and discomfort, and discomfort leads to resistance.
  - iv. Evaluation is difficult and uncomfortable.
  - v. It's hard to distinguish between personality and performance.
- F. Discuss effective ways to give both positive and negative feedback.
- G. Talk about how to respond effectively to criticism.
- H. Determine areas in which supervisors should evaluate supervisees.
- I. Understand that there are many ways in which to evaluate. Study different evaluation processes.
  - i. Encourage frequent, informal evaluation along with periodic, regular formal evaluation times.
  - ii. Evaluation should be based on evaluation goals. Goals should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, results-focused, timely).
  - iii. Ensure evaluation of supervisee's documentation.
  - iv. Incorporate, as appropriate, evaluation of tapes or other electronic representations of the supervisee's work.
  - v. Any deficits should be addressed with suggested remedies and timelines for addressing the deficits.
- J. Discuss the centrality of timely, accurate documentation of evaluation procedures and activities.

## **10. Terminating Supervision**

- A. Review and make meaning of the work done in supervision.
- B. Encourage the supervisee to talk about termination and to forecast his/her future.
- C. Think through what the supervisor's relationship with the supervisee will be after supervision is terminated. Discuss any resulting ethical problems.
- D. Be scrupulous and ethical about preparing and submitting paperwork on supervision.
- E. Avoid termination mistakes:
  - i. Ending abruptly
  - ii. Disengaging prematurely
  - iii. Minimizing the importance of the relationship
  - iv. Ignoring signs of risk
  - v. Trying to pack in everything at the end of the relationship
  - vi. Forgetting things in the final rush

- vii. Focusing too much on self
- viii. Saving the worst for last

**11. Taking a licensing test**

- A. Discuss the partnership between Association of Social Work Boards and ACT in developing social work professional licensing exams, which are proven to be valid, reliable, and legally defensible.
- B. Examine the Clinical Examination content outline (available on ASWB website).
- C. Explain that the test is composed of questions with four possible answers. The primary cause of poor performance on the test is NOT READING THE QUESTION CAREFULLY. The ACT website has resources to help supervisees overcome reading problems.
- D. Encourage supervisees to visit the ASWB website and take the practice exam there.
- E. Talk with supervisees about how to take a test; encourage them to seek help from local colleges and universities in effective test-taking procedures.

**12. Bibliography of relevant readings, helpful websites, movies, books, and other resources that can assist supervisors and supervisees to enhance the supervision experience**